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(54) Retaining an outer sleeve in position on a container

(57) A package comprises an inner container (10) and an outer sleeve (32), within which the container can be accommodated, the container being provided with a recess (20) or other formation and the sleeve comprising a wall provided with a portion (36) (hereinafter referred to as the "tab"), intermediate the ends of the sleeve, and which can be moved from a first position, wherein the container can be slid into and out of the sleeve and a second position wherein the tab can engage with the recess or other formation to prevent the container being slid out of the sleeve without damage to the tab or breakage of the tab from the wall of the sleeve. The container (10) may be a tray and the sleeve (32) be of cardboard having parallel cuts (38) which allow the tab (36) to be deflected about fold lines (40) into the recess (20).

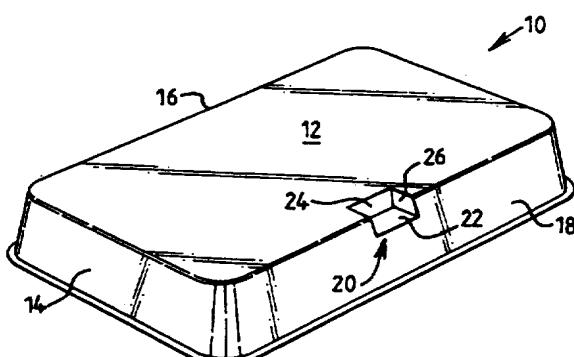


FIG. 2

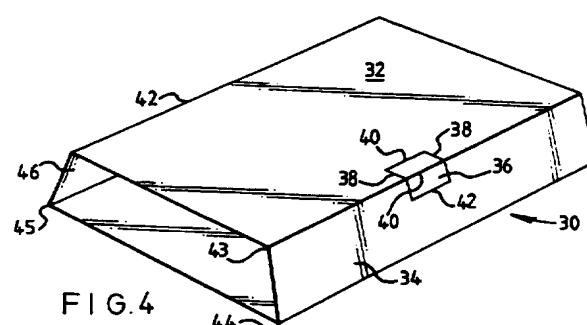


FIG. 4

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

This print takes account of replacement documents submitted after the date of filing to enable the application to comply with the formal requirements of the Patents Rules 1995

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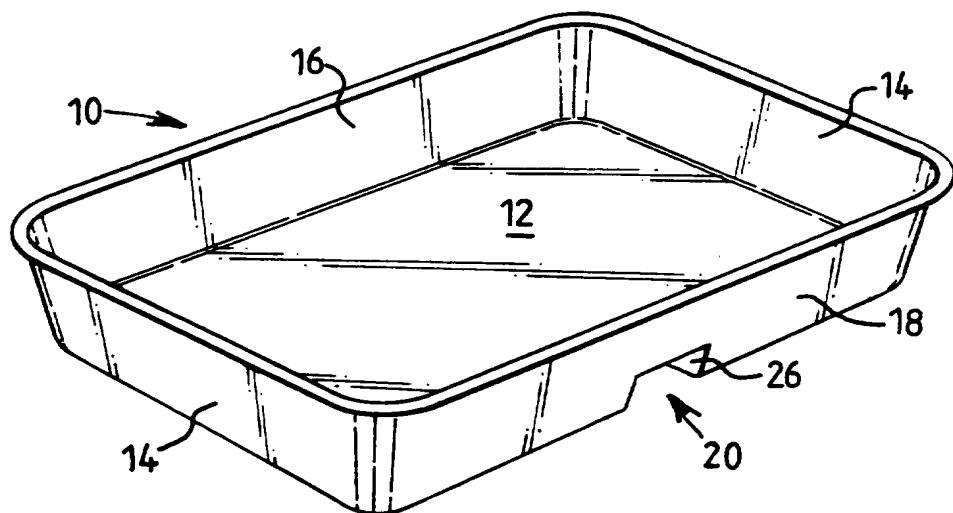


FIG. 1

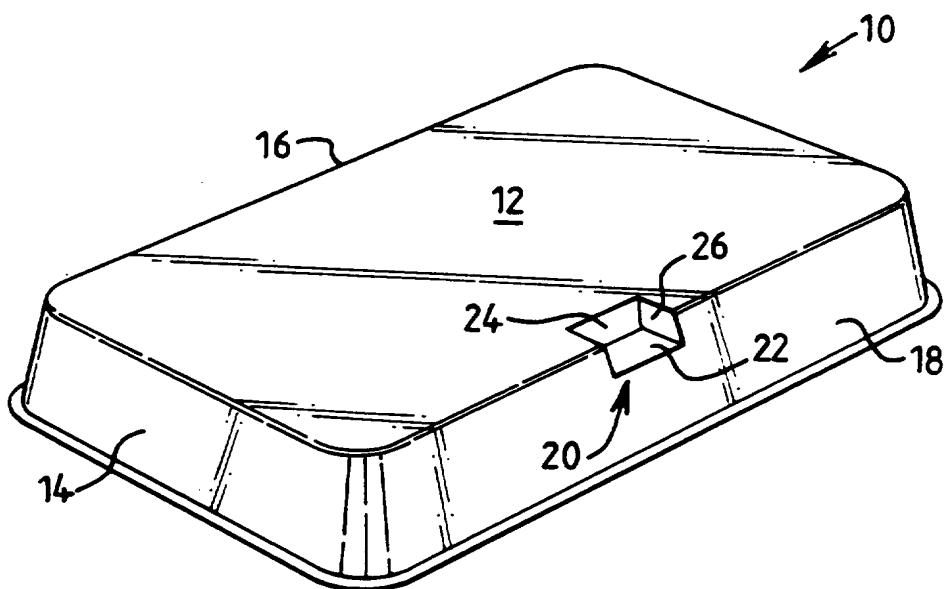


FIG. 2

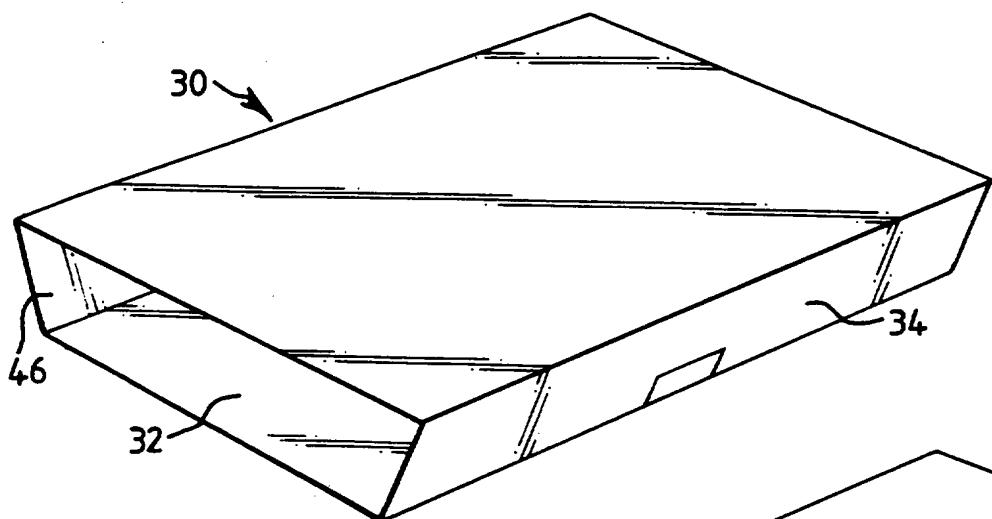


FIG. 3

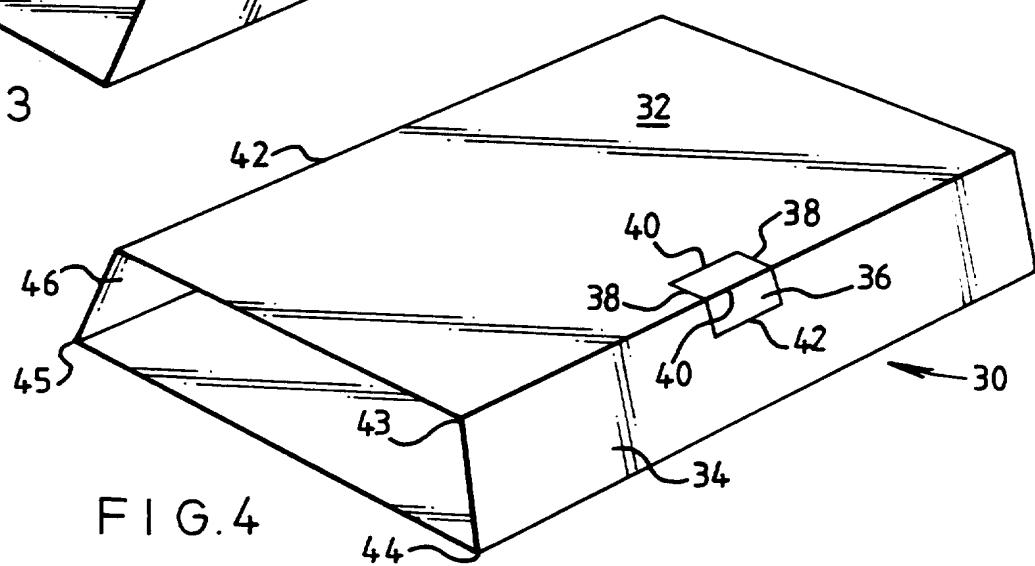


FIG. 4

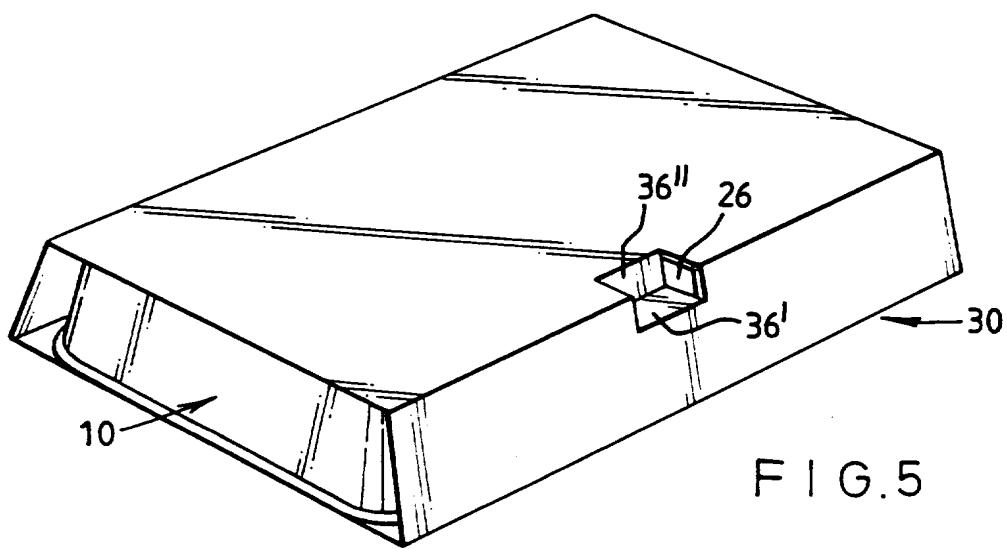


FIG. 5

PACKAGE

The present invention relates to a package comprising a container and an outer sleeve within which the container is located. Such an outer sleeve may be provided for the purpose of covering an open top of the container, protecting the container against damage during transport, facilitating storage and display of the container and for bearing textual or graphic matter descriptive of or otherwise pertaining to the contents of the container.

A known package comprises an inner container, generally in the form of a tray, and an outer sleeve accommodating the container, the sleeve being provided with locking tabs at each end to locate the container within the sleeve and to prevent undesired movement of the container out of the sleeve. With a known package as described above the locking tabs can be easily deformed or folded back to allow the container to be removed from the sleeve and the container can subsequently be replaced in the sleeve and the locking tabs returned to their original position. Accordingly, it is not evident when the container has been tampered with.

The present invention aims to provide a package comprising an inner container and an outer sleeve, wherein the container can be located positively and centrally within the sleeve, it is immediately evident if the container has been tampered with, and which is aesthetically superior to the known packages referred to above.

In accordance with the present invention there is provided a package comprising an inner container and an outer sleeve, within which the container can be accommodated, the container being provided with a recess or other formation and the sleeve comprising a wall provided with a portion

(hereinafter referred to as the "tab"), intermediate the ends of the sleeve, and which can be moved from a first position, wherein the container can be slid into and out of the sleeve and a second position wherein the tab can engage with the recess or other formation to prevent the container being slid out of the sleeve without damage to the tab or breakage of the tab from the wall of the sleeve.

Such damage to the tab or breakage of the tab from the sleeve makes evident the fact of removal of the container from the sleeve in order to tamper with the contents of the container and subsequent replacement of the container in the sleeve.

Preferably the tab when in its second position is biased against returning to its first position, so that the tab when in its second position will normally remain in that position.

Preferably the tab cooperates with the recess or other formation so that when the tab is in its second position it has no exposed free edges, which could facilitate manual movement of the tab to its first position.

Preferably the tab comprises a web which is connected at a first pair of opposite sides or ends thereof to the wall of the sleeve and has free edges, unconnected to the wall of the sleeve, along a second pair of opposite sides or ends.

Preferably the wall of the sleeve comprises two webs which are connected along a fold line of the wall of the sleeve parallel with the longitudinal axis of the sleeve, and the tab is connected to each said web along respective first and second fold lines (at said first pair of opposite ends or sides of the tab)

parallel with said longitudinal axis. Preferably the tab also has a third fold line which in said first position of the tab is in alignment with said fold line of said wall and in said second portion of the tab is disposed inwardly of the sleeve relative to said fold line. Preferably the wall of the sleeve has two slits (at the second pair of opposite ends or sides of the tab) which extend transversely to said fold lines to define together with the first and second fold lines, the tab.

To facilitate breakage of the tab from the remainder of the sleeve if the tab is tampered with and to facilitate shearing of the tab from the remainder of the sleeve when the container is slid from the sleeve, slits may be provided in the fold lines along the first pair of opposite sides or ends of the web.

Preferably the recess in the container is provided at the junction of a side wall and the base of the container. Preferably said recess has end walls which are normal to the longitudinal direction of the container.

Furthermore preferably the end walls of the recess are closely adjacent to said free edges of the tab when the tab is in its second position, so that the free edges are not exposed.

Preferably the package is such that if the container is slid out of the sleeve when the tab is in its second position, the tab is sheared from the remainder of the sleeve, whereby the fact that the container has been slid from the sleeve is immediately evident.

The invention is further described below by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein,

Figure 1 is a top perspective view of the container;

Figure 2 is an inverted perspective view of the container;

Figure 3 is a top perspective view of a sleeve of the package;

Figure 4 is an inverted perspective view of the sleeve;

Figure 5 is similar to Figure 4 but shows the container accommodated with the sleeve.

Referring to the drawings, an open topped container or tray 10 comprises a base 12, end walls 14 and sidewalls 16 and 18. At the junction of the base 12 and the sidewall 18 is formed a recess 20.

The recess 20 has walls 22 and 24 which extend in a longitudinal direction of the container and end walls 26 which are normal to the longitudinal direction of the container.

The package also comprises a sleeve 30. The wall of the sleeve 30 is formed from a length of cardboard which has been cut to shape and provided with fold lines 41 to 44 which divide the length into webs and the ends of which have been joined together so that the sleeve may assume a trapezoidal section as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5. The webs include base web 32 and a side web 34.

A tab 36 is formed in the web 32 and 34.

The tab 36 is defined by cuts or slits 38 in the web 32 and 34 and fold lines 40 in the webs 32 and 34 respectively. Slits (not shown) are provided along the greater part of the lengths of the fold lines 40 and intermediate the ends of the fold lines.

The tab 36 has a fold line 42 intermediate the fold lines 40 and dividing the tab into two portions 36' and 36" (see Figure 5).

The fold lines 40 and 42 are parallel to the longitudinal direction of the sleeve.

The tab 36 can be moved from a first position, as shown in Figure 3, wherein the tab is in alignment with the webs 32 and 34 to a second position described below. The resilience of the cardboard biases the tab 36 against movement from either position to the other position.

To assemble the package the container is slid into the sleeve 30, the tab being in its first position, so that the container is centrally disposed in the sleeve with the tab 36 of the sleeve in alignment with the recess 20 of the container. The tab 36 is then pushed, from externally of the sleeve to a second position, as shown in Figure 5, wherein the two webs 36' and 36" of the tab lie closely adjacent the walls 22 and 24 respectively of the recess 20 of the container.

The container 10 is thereby located centrally within the sleeve 30 by virtue of the engagement of the end walls 26 of the recess with the end edges of the tab 36.

The resilience of the cardboard of the sleeve 30 biases the tab 36 against movement from its second position to its first position. Thus the tab 36, once in its second position, will normally remain in that position.

Because of the close proximity of the end edges of the tab 36 to the end walls 26 of the recess, it is extremely difficult to move manually the tab from its second position to its first position once the container has been located in the sleeve.

When it is desired to remove the container 10 from the sleeve 30, the container is pushed hard relative to the sleeve in the longitudinal direction of the sleeve and the container, thereby causing the tab 36 to shear from the remainder of the sleeve along the fold lines 40. Such shearing is facilitated by the slits along the fold lines 40.

If the container 20 is replaced in the sleeve 30, it is immediately evident that the container had been removed from the sleeve because the tab is no longer connected to the remainder of the sleeve.

A person intent on tampering with the contents of the container 20 might attempt to move the tab 36 back to its first position so that the container could be removed from the sleeve without shearing the tab from the sleeve and making evident the fact that the package had been interfered with. However, such a person would find it extremely difficult to gain a grip on the tab since its free edges are closely adjacent the end walls 26 of the recess 20 and any manipulation of the tab, even by means of an instrument pushed into the sleeve from one end of the sleeve would most probably result in the tab breaking away at least partially from the sleeve along the fold lines 40 thereby

making evident the tampering with the package. The slits along the fold lines 40 would of course facilitate the breakage of the tab 36 from the sleeve.

To allow the sleeve to be folded flat after its manufacture and before insertion of the container, the sleeve may be provided with, in addition to the fold lines 41 to 44, a further fold line 46.

The sleeve may be longer than, the same length as or shorter than the container. In such case the tab 36 when in its second position, by engagement in the recess 20 maintains the sleeve in a fixed position relative to the container and the container centrally located relative to the sleeve.

CLAIMS

1. A package comprising an inner container and an outer sleeve, within which the container can be accommodated, the container being provided with a recess or other formation and the sleeve comprising a wall provided with a portion (hereinafter referred to as the "tab"), intermediate the ends of the sleeve, and which can be moved from a first position, wherein the container can be slid into and out of the sleeve and a second position wherein the tab can engage with the recess or other formation to prevent the container being slid out of the sleeve without damage to the tab or breakage of the tab from the wall of the sleeve.
2. A package according to claim 1, wherein the tab when in its second position is biased against returning to its first position, so that the tab when in its second position will normally remain in that position.
3. A package according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the tab cooperates with the recess or other formation so that when the tab is in its second position it has no exposed free edges, which could facilitate manual movement of the tab to its first position.
4. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the tab comprises a web which is connected at a first pair of opposite sides or ends thereof to the wall of the sleeve and has free edges, unconnected to the wall of the sleeve, along a second pair of opposite sides or ends.
5. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the wall of the sleeve comprises two webs which are connected along a fold line of the wall of the sleeve parallel with the longitudinal axis of the sleeve, and the tab is

connected to each said web along respective first and second fold lines (at said first pair of opposite ends or sides of the tab) parallel with said longitudinal axis.

6. A package according to any claim 5, wherein the tab also has a third fold line which in said first position of the tab is in alignment with said fold line of said wall and in said second portion of the tab is disposed inwardly of the sleeve relative to said fold line.
7. A package according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the wall of the sleeve has two slits (at the second pair of opposite ends or sides of the tab) which extend transversely to said fold lines to define together with the first and second fold lines, the tab.
8. A package according to any of claims 5 to 7, slits are provided in the fold lines along the first pair of opposite sides or ends of the web.
9. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the recess in the container is provided at the junction of a side wall and the base of the container.
10. A package according to claim 9, wherein said recess has end walls which are normal to the longitudinal direction of the container.
11. A package according to claim 10, wherein the end walls of the recess are closely adjacent to said free edges of the tab when the tab is in its second position, so that the free edges are not exposed.

12. A package according to any preceding claim, wherein the package is such that if the container is slid out of the sleeve when the tab is in its second position, the tab is sheared from the remainder of the sleeve, whereby the fact that the container has been slid from the sleeve is immediately evident.
13. A package substantially as described herein with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.



The
Patent
Office
II

Application No: GB 9525503.0
Claims searched: 1-13

Examiner: Stephen Smith
Date of search: 29 January 1996

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.O): B8C (CPA); B8P (PK1)

Int Cl (Ed.6): B65D 5/38, 17/00, 77/04

Other: ONLINE:WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X, P	GB 2288388 A (BRYANT & MAY) pages 4 and 5	1-4
X	GB 1553868 (MAYLED) lines 58-90 of page 1	1-3, 9-12
X	GB 1380921 (D R G) line 49 of page 1 to line 3 of page 2	1-3
X	GB 1073301 (CLELAND) lines 33-84 of page 2	1-3, 12
X	US 4284204 (CAREY) line 59 of column 2 to line 25 of column 3	1-3
X	US 3542279 (EISENBERG) line 70 of column 2 to line 43 of column 3	1-7, 12

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.